

challenges, and we ought to capitalize on those areas where our interests intersect. We have a mutual interest, for instance, in assuring adequate oil supplies, preventing disruptions in oil and gas exporting states and in the sea lanes, promoting greater efficiency, developing and expanding clean sources of energy, coordinating build-up and release of strategic stockpiles to prevent price spikes during supply emergencies, and reducing emissions of greenhouse gases. The time is ripe for U.S. leadership on a serious and comprehensive energy and climate initiative in Asia that would ramp-up the development and deployment of efficiency-related technologies, establish an adequate research and development fund for carbon sequestration and related technologies, increase opportunities for U.S. businesses to capture a share of the region's burgeoning clean energy market, and create a forum to address supply security-related concerns.

We will not be able to fight global climate change effectively unless the United States is able to lead the world toward a post-Kyoto Protocol framework that includes binding limits on the large projected growth in greenhouse gas emissions from China, India, and other Asian countries. The Bush administration's prolonged refusal to confront the challenges of climate change at home has robbed the United States of its ability to lead effectively in such efforts abroad. We should use the opportunity of APEC to discuss a new, comprehensive energy initiative in Asia to address the twin challenges of energy security and climate change.

The U.S. also should work with its Asian partners to strengthen democracy. Nowhere is the need for building consensus more pressing than in Burma. Peaceful pro-democracy activists continue to put their lives on the line for freedom, and democratic nations should stand in solidarity with them. U.S. leadership is vital to any regional effort to press the military junta to achieve national reconciliation.

The U.S. must resume an active leadership role in Asia. We cannot sit on the sidelines. We have too much at stake in Asia, in terms of our prosperity, security, energy, and health. If we are to protect and advance these interests, America must be a reliable and engaged partner. It is good that President Bush is traveling to Sydney for APEC, and I know we all wish him success at this important summit. But the time has long since passed to pursue a new path that reflects the importance of Asia to our national interests and enables the United States to play a greater and appropriate leadership role in the region. We cannot afford any more missed opportunities.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO COBB ENERGY PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

● Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I wish to honor in the RECORD the grand opening of the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre.

The Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre is the first major performing arts facility built in metro Atlanta in four decades and upon opening will immediately become the new home of the Atlanta Opera.

A great deal of planning has gone into the development of this state-of-the-art landmark on Atlanta's horizon by great friends and community leaders such as Earl Smith, Travis Duke, Johnny Gresham, Max Bacon, Bill Dunaway, Sam Olens, Robert Voyles, and Michele Swann. Special gratitude also goes to John Williams, a great benefactor and the namesake of this grand 2,750-seat theatre.

The arts are an essential ingredient for the quality of life of a community and the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre will improve the quality of life not just for the community of Cobb but for the entire metropolitan Atlanta region and the Southeastern United States.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure and it is a privilege to recognize on the floor of the Senate the grand opening of the Cobb Energy Performing Arts Centre. I congratulate the community on this wonderful new crown jewel.●

CONGRATULATING THE BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

● Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I speak today to congratulate the Bridgeport Public School System, which for the second year in a row has been selected as a finalist for the Broad Prize for Urban Education. The \$1 million Broad Prize, the largest education prize given to school districts, is awarded each year to honor urban school districts that demonstrate the greatest overall performance and improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps for poor and minority students.

That Bridgeport has been nominated for this award 2 years in a row speaks volumes about the progress Bridgeport has made educating its students. The city's schools serve the highest percentage of low-income students in Connecticut, with 95 percent of its students eligible for either free or reduced-price school lunches. Yet in 2006, Bridgeport students outperformed their peers in demographically similar districts in the State in reading and math at all grade levels. In fact, Bridgeport is the only one of those school districts to improve in reading and math at all grade levels from 2003 to 2006. This improvement was seen across all subgroups of students, including low-income, African-American and Hispanic students.

The city has also done a remarkable job in closing the achievement gap between White and minority students. Bridgeport has reduced achievement gaps between Hispanic students and their White peers in high school reading and math, as well as in elementary school reading, and the district has reduced achievement gaps for African-American students in high school math. In addition, Bridgeport has closed the Hispanic achievement gap faster than the State average in elementary and high school reading and high school math. This is no small feat, considering that almost 90 percent of the district's students are racial minorities.

The Broad Foundation has praised the district's willingness to take a hard look at the data it collects on student performance, and using it to identify where it is succeeding and where it needs to improve. In fact, Bridgeport uses this data to put together quarterly assessments that are tightly aligned to State standards. Data from these assessments is available in real time, allowing for immediate diagnostics and subsequent adjustments. Given the proliferation of data, administrators and teachers have become more comfortable using it and district administrators have reported that school principals have been using the data to determine their schools' needs and plans. Teachers have also reported that they too analyze the data when meeting together in teams to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

This results-based approach, where the main focus is on student performance, has so far been a rousing success. I would like to congratulate Superintendent John J. Ramos, Sr., and all the teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel of the Bridgeport public schools not just for the nomination, but for all the hard work they have done to provide a better education to their students. They have proven that it is possible to give all children a fair opportunity to receive a high-quality education. May other districts follow their example.●

SWEARING IN OF MAURICE DUBÉ

● Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, today I honor Maurice "Moe" Dubé whom I had the privilege to on August 14 welcome home to Maine and officially swear in as Maine's district director of the U.S. Small Business Administration, SBA. I was incredibly honored to be able to celebrate Moe's appointment with him and his family in Lewiston-Auburn, where both of our roots run so deep.

Moe's return to Maine is wonderful news for the numerous small businesses and manufacturers in our state who depend on the SBA and the valuable programs it administers. In my capacity as the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I have had the